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Foreign Correspondence, Items, etc.

Dear Mr. Editor:

Paris, Jan. 30, 1857.

On looking over my MSS. this morning I came across a fragment of a journal, which, if I had been a regular correspondent of any paper, might have been put into ship-shape and launched into the great sea of print that overflows the American continent, whereas said fragment has been lying high and dry in my drawer, like a bit of stranded spar or rigging.

On the 15th day of July, 1857, under a genuine midsummer sun, I left Paris by the *Chemin de fer de Lyon*, with the earnest intention of seeing a little of Switzerland. Having just been so fortunate as to sell three of my pictures, I determined to attempt what I had ever and anon dreamed about all my life, and know by experience whether there were such things as Alps outside of picture books. I say I determined to see a little of Switzerland. I was not a vulgar tourist, with knapsack, thick shoes, and Alp-stock, and had not the slightest idea of doing the great St. Bernard or Mount Rosa. I was but a poor painter, going off to work, and hoping to bring back something fresh from Nature upon canvas. I was not bound for St. Gothard or the Jungfrau—but only for the lake of Geneva—perhaps, Mont Blanc. I set out, therefore, not on the scale of my neighbor Dives, to whom Switzerland was to be a luxury—a sort of cold bath, and, perhaps, a capital hygienics and gymnastics, which he could well afford, while I couldn't. I was prepared to deny myself. My prospectus was work, not fun. I was like a man to whom a friend might say, "Come, let us go to the opera of William Tell—Rossini's grandest work, they say. There are Lablache, Ronconi, Mario, Grisi, Alboni, Malibran, Jenny Lind, and I don't know how many singers—but mind, I can't treat you to their voices—you must go away after the overture!" Or, "Come, let us go to St. Peter's," says my Mephistophiles; "but do you know a law has been passed forbidding heretics like you from entering, and I can't show you any more than the façade, and the fountains, and the colonnades outside!" *Très bien—merci, monsieur*. I will bear and see what I can, and give thanks, and take notes. On the whole I hate a crowd, and will just stand in the lobby and see the people going in, and imagine how Malibran sings, and how the wondrous golden dome looks to the devotees.

So here I am *en route* for the overture to William Tell, and the vestibule of the great church, whose aisles are the grand dim precipitous gorges, whose altars the green glaciers, and whose mountain columns are capited with snow, and domed over with the divine frescoes of clouds, sunshine, stars, and moonlight.

We are *en route*, Monsieur Chiffonnier. It is six o'clock in the morning, and you are so busy there poking over that pile of cabbage leaves and scraps of paper and ends of cigars, that you don't seem aware I am passing by in a sumptuous *voiture de place*, with a big trunk atop—my passport in my pocket and money in my purse. And pretty soon your dusty Paris, with all its crowds, from rag-picker to emperor, who bake and sizzle along the bitumen pavements, will be far behind, and the snow-capped Alps in sight.

And to my surprise, the snow-capped Alps were in sight much sooner than I expected. That is, as I was flying along on the railroad, nearing Macon, if I had not known in which direction to look for my snow-capped grantees, and if the

atmosphere had not been particularly clear, I might have mistaken what I saw afar off on the dim horizon for a bank of luminous clouds. And, indeed, for some time I had my doubts whether they were mountains or clouds. I prayed inwardly that they might not crumble into air. The sun was nearly setting. I watched this rosy distant vision with straining eyes. Only stay, dear Alps—do not fade away. Don't let this, my first glimpse of your distant glories, prove an unsubstantial pageant! I turned to a young French woman in the car, and said, "*Voilà Mont Blanc!*" She took it rather stupidly; and if I had said, "There is your stopping-place" (some little lonely depot where she was to get out), she would have been ten times more excited. Indeed, I have my doubts if she ever suspected those were the Alps, or thought of them a moment afterwards. To me, this dreamy, distant view was a delicious glimpse of the delectable mountains. I could see now they did not melt away. I could trace the solid mountain form; and as they disappeared in the evening grey, I was content to bid them good night, for I should soon see them more nearly.

The railroad ride was long and hot, and I was glad, after thirteen hours of rattly-bang and steam, to put up for the night at a cool, quiet inn at Macon. My windows opened to the east, on the Saône. It was a very warm night. Early in the morning—it couldn't have been more than four o'clock—I was gratified and somewhat surprised to see on the extreme horizon, for a second time, his majesty, the monarch of mountains. But this time he was dark against the red morning sky. At Geneva I had the third view of his majesty's head and shoulders from the quay. Since that, I have lost sight of him. He was one of the Cremonas in my overture. In fact, he led the orchestra, as he should have done.

Now all this may seem cockney twaddle to my friend Dives, who, in all relating to Switzerland, was long ago *blasé*. To me it was very real. Notwithstanding, at the present date I confess to being somewhat *blasé* of Vevey.

On the 16th a railroad took me as far as a place called Seyssel, on the frontier of Savoy. At a place called Ambérieu, the mountains commence. And from here, all the way to Seyssel, I and my two car companions, a silent, bearded Frenchman, and a social Sister of Charity, were rushing from one side of the car to the other, breaking our necks to look up at the craggy and savage mountains overhead. It was a wild, lonely, uninhabited looking region through which we passed. The villages were few, and they all looked as if their inhabitants had deserted for fear of the toppling crags overhead.

At Seyssel we took diligence, and no sooner had crossed the river, than all our baggage was taken down and inspected by the Sardinian custom-house officers. We had good scenery all the way to Geneva; but excessive heat and intolerable dust. In all my life I never encountered such whirlwinds of the latter article. To be roasted in a hot diligence of a hot July afternoon was bad enough; but to be roasted and basted too!—powdered from top to toe;—eyes, throat, nose, hair, beard, clothes so clogged and covered, that if I had had any acquaintance at Geneva I am sure they would not have recognized me on descending from the powdered diligence. Besides the dust and heat, we were followed by as many beggars as I ever encountered in Naples or Rome.

As the foregoing is a veritable fragment, breaking off short, as an Irishman might say, in the middle, I will only add in continuation that, after several days at Vevey, where I made some

studies, I went to Morges, on the lake Geneva, where one has a fine distant view of Mont Blanc and the mountains of Savoy. From thence to Geneva, and one fine summer's morning took my seat on the top of a diligence for St. Martin, about twelve miles from Mont Blanc. The scenery all the way up was, of course, the very finest. At St. Martin you come full upon the mountain in all his grandeur, covered with his eternal snows—

“Glorious as the gates of Heaven.”

Here I remained several days, and was so fortunate as to have uninterrupted views of the magnificent snow peaks. I made accurate drawings and some attempts at the wondrous coloring which this dying dolphin of a mountain takes at sunset; and have at this moment on my easel a sizable picture in which I have given this effect of sunlight lingering on the highest peaks, and partly reflected in the water; the whole valley of Ohamouny lying in the shadows of evening. I also painted a morning effect. What seemed very singular to me was, the intense heat of the weather. It was positively too overpoweringly hot to work except in the early morning and the evening. Besides which the flies were excessively annoying. At St. Martin were two painters besides myself; one was a young Englishman, who was doing feeble little aquarels; the other was our Casilear, who has made some admirably careful and true studies.

Having heard the overture, I left the theatre, consoled, however, with the hope of being present at some other representation, when I may have more to say.

One thing, however, struck me in the Swiss scenery—the sense of imprisonment you have (after a little while) shut in all around as you are by those tremendous mountains and cliffs. You long to pierce the Titan barriers, and get a glimpse of some far-off horizon. After all, fields and woods and “the common growth of mother earth,” yield subjects more lovely, on the whole, than these gigantic aspects of nature. One needs so little to make a picture. There is perhaps a little too much view-hunting among artists; and it becomes a question how far travel, for the sake of scenery, is favorable or prejudicial to the painter.

Following the example of some of your correspondents, who seem to express their partiality for certain colors by their signatures, I have concluded to symbolize my catholicity by subscribing myself yours, truly,

ENTIRE PALETTE.

DÜSSELDORF, 5th January, 1858.

The principal event that has occurred here during the past three months is the completion of a picture by Leutze. The subject is an incident in the life of Frederick the Great: it represents his presentation to his mother after his release from prison, which event, it appears, took place at a ball given for the occasion. Young Frederick is represented as kneeling before his mother, who bends over him; a little behind is his father between his two sisters; and on each side of these two principal groups are seen the court personages of the time, while in the background we catch a glimpse of a dance. The whole scene is lighted in a magnificent manner by chandeliers suspended from the ceiling. This painting is very profuse of detail in architecture, furniture, and other accessories; they are, however, as might be expected, in perfect subordination to the general effect, and in no case are over finished. The color forms a prominent feature, and is managed with great skill,

being bright and various, yet so subjoined and blended as to produce the most perfect harmony. Leutze is regarded here as one of the most successful of colorists; it is said of him that he has not an equal on the continent—probably not in the world. During the week the picture was on exhibition, it was visited by crowds of artists and citizens. Of course each visitor had his own opinion; one thought the old king's nose too red (knowing, perhaps, that he drank twenty glasses of beer a day), another fancied the mother was a little too stiff, while a third found fault with the red hose of a courtier; however, as a whole, they agreed that, to say the least of it, it was a splendid thing. The size of the picture is about five feet by seven. It is to be sent to Berlin.

Mr. Leutze, although he has been here and is associated with the artists of Düsseldorf, for more than fifteen years, is still known as “the American.” It is to him that all Americans are sent, whether students, amateurs, or tourists: he is always glad to see them, and seems to take real pleasure in doing anything in his power to advance their several schemes. He has a large atelier, built to his order, in which he and his pupils paint. Its walls are hung with cartoons of several of his completed pictures; among them is an immense drawing of the “Battle of Monmouth,” the “Last Night of Charles II.,” and the “Departure of Columbus for America.” He has at present six or seven pupils, only one of whom is an American; the others are Germans. He has had, at divers times, quite a number of American students in his atelier; in fact, nearly all who ever came here with the intention of painting anything except landscape, have studied with him. Some of these young men have since gained a reputation, and are now painting at home; others are still studying on the continent, some at Paris, some at Rome.

Lessing has been engaged for about two years and a half on a picture representing the capture of some pope, by a king of France. It is an order from the Prussian king, and is not yet finished. In addition to this great work, which takes up the greater part of his time, Lessing paints occasional landscapes. Several of these have been on exhibition: they are not pretensions either in size or subject; small things, dashed off apparently as much for amusement as with the intention of serious work.

In the way of new landscapes we have had a moonlight by Hilgrees, and a composition by Yungheim. These pictures are large; and, although they probably mark no new era in Art, are undeniably very fine works. The first is a winter scene; the light of the moon breaking out from behind a mass of clouds, illuminates a plane of frozen ground, partly covered by ice and snow; it is relieved only by the bare stumps of some willows. In the foreground is a blacksmith's shop with a frozen pond in front. This part of the picture is exceedingly black, but the relief is perfect; the artist has displayed great ability in managing the *claire obscure*; he has represented a group of men as standing on the pond in front of the house, and so perfectly are they painted that, although they are scarcely observable except on close examination, they are detailed to the expression of different emotions. The composition by Yungheim is a scene from the Hof Garten idealized. A lakelet spanned by a graceful bridge occupies the centre: on each side are masses of rich foliage, green but not cold: rising out of this are four statues, which serve the double purpose of relieving the shades and giving a poetic effect to the whole. A little in front and on one side of the bridge is a flight of stone steps, leading

to the water's edge; a delicately shaped boat, hung with drapery and richly gilt, receives a man and a woman about to step into it, while in the distance are seen some swans floating at leisure in the shade. These pictures, tried either by the test of execution, the truth of the objects represented, or weighed by their effect on the mind, must have a high place. They look like distant but beautiful dreams; creations of the imagination which we love. There are also two landscapes of forest scenery, exhibited by Kessler, which deserve more than a mere mention.

The only *genre* pictures produced here lately are some by Hubner. Portraits and fancy heads seem rather scarce. As a general thing, these works are extremely poor; one is astonished to see them on the walls of such an exhibition as we look for from the artists of Düsseldorf. Many of these things would disgrace a photographer; they are poorly drawn, worse colored, and destitute of expression. A portrait of a lady by Hildebrandt is a more fit subject for a moralizer on human frailty than a writer of Art gossip: he still continues to paint, but it is no longer like the author of Othello and Desdemona; his genius has departed; the mechanist only remains.

The great annual exhibition of paintings held at the Academy, closed a month ago. It is generally regarded as a failure: they had but few good paintings, and they were nearly buried under the mass of rubbish which surrounded them; it is, however, said to be as good as in preceding years. It is impossible to conceive that the artists of Germany were fairly represented at this exhibition; we must allow that the place is in disrepute and that no great artist will exhibit his work here. Even this being granted, something better could have been expected. There was an exhibition at Berlin (and at several other places, as Munich, Antwerp, and Dresden); so it is possible that the best productions of German Art were there: at least, for the country's honor, it is to be hoped that such was the case.

Mr. W. H. Beard, of Buffalo, passed through this place on his way home, which he has doubtless reached before this.

L. * *

Extract from a Private Letter:

"Rome, December 16th, 1857.

"The only commissions I had for this winter have been countermanded. There is little new here. A few more American artists have come to town. Very many of us have nothing to do. Only one work of painting or sculpture has been sold this winter."

ENGLAND.—An "Architectural Photographical Association" has been organized in London, the object of which is to enable subscribers to become possessed of superior photographs purchased by the association, from such specimens as may be exhibited on its walls. "The rule laid down by the committee is, that each subscriber of one guinea is to be at liberty to select four subjects from certain specified screens or portfolios; subscribers beyond that amount may make their selections free of restriction."—The Royal Academy proposes to create a Senatorial or Honorary class of Royal Academicians, to consist of the elder members of the Academy. "All the honors and advantages of the Academy would cling to them, while they would be relieved of its harassing duties. Should the proposition be carried, the Royal Academy would consist of three bodies—the Associates, the Academicians, and the Senators—representing the youth, the manhood, and the maturity of Art."—Sir Charles Eastlake has obtained for the National

Gallery, at a cost of £7,000, twenty-two pictures by "the old masters." The collection consists of works by Cimabue, Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, Spinello Aretino, Andrea Orcagna, Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Mantegna, etc., etc.—Mr. Ruskin has written a letter in defence of the action of the Liverpool Academy in purchasing a Pre-Raphaelite picture, which purchase seems to have been distasteful to some of its members; at the close of this letter Mr. Ruskin says: "I consider that any average work from the hand of any of the four leaders of Pre-Raphaelitism (Rossetti, Millais, Hunt, John Lewis) is, singly, worth, at least, three of any other pictures whatever by living painters."

RAUCH, CHRISTIAN.

This Prussian sculptor was born at Arolsen, January 2d, 1777; he died in Dresden, December 3d, 1857. His native town, although small, was, as the capital of the little principality of Waldeck, richly supplied with works on the Fine Arts, which produced an irresistible impression upon the young man's mind. He received some instruction in the rudiments of statuary from a sculptor attached to the little court, and afterwards he passed some time in the studio of an artist of Cassel. In 1797, he repaired to Berlin. Here he struggled bravely with many adverse circumstances. He was employed in the household of the king as family servant, and frequently brought into contact with Queen Louise; thus he had many opportunities for fixing her features upon his mind, and he became enabled to model her bust in clay. The queen, not a little surprised to find so much artistic genius in one in his position, encouraged him in his efforts by affording him the means of completing his education at Dresden. In 1804 he accompanied Count Sandrecky to Rome. Here he found a zealous patron and friend in Wilhelm von Humboldt, who was then the Prussian ambassador, and a still more invaluable boon in the friendship and inspiring influence of Thorwaldsen and Canova. He soon produced a variety of works, such as bas-reliefs of Hippolytus and Phædra, statues of Mars and Venus, and a Young Girl, a colossal bust of the king of Prussia, a full-length statue of Queen Louise, a bust of Raphael Mengs, which all, more or less, exhibit the rapid progress which he made in his art. In 1811, he was invited by the king of Prussia to take a part in the competition for the monument intended for Queen Louise, who had since died; Rauch's design was accepted, and his monument, upon which he brought to bear the feelings of gratitude which animated him towards the beautiful queen, who had been his benefactress, excited on its exhibition great enthusiasm, and is, to this day, considered the finest piece of statuary of the kind in Prussia, and the best inspired production of Rauch. It is in the Mausoleum at Charlottenburg. The candelabra connected with it came from the chisel of Rauch's friend, Tieck, brother of the poet. Crowds of visitors may be daily seen around this monument, which, as far as tenderness and beauty of conception go, is unsurpassed by any of Rauch's succeeding works. However, he continued to produce a great number of statues and busts—more than seventy in all, including twenty of colossal dimensions. The most celebrated of them are his Blücher, at Berlin and Breslau; the statue of Frederick William III., upon the sarcophagus at Charlottenburg, as counterpart to that of Queen Louise; Ernest Augustus, of Hanover, and his consort, somewhat after the style of the monument at Charlottenburg; Frederick the Great; Kant, at Königsberg; Albrecht Dürer, at Nuremberg; Goethe, etc. His last work was a group illustrating an incident from the life of

Moses. Rauch was a conscientious artist, ever anxious to hold up the mirror to Nature. His *Blücher* is a fine instance of this. The coarse little hero of Waterloo looks out from the marble, as if he would scold his soldiers, or pounce like a clumsy bear upon the poor French. Yet Rauch, with all his power to render the features of his favorite Prussian sovereign or soldiers, was deficient in the higher poetical attributes of Art, or, perhaps, it is more proper to say that, with the exception of his celebrated queen, there was little in the mass of Prussian individuals whose statues he chiselled, to kindle much inspiration in the imagination of the artist. Rauch had an imposing, statuesque appearance, and impressed all who came in contact with him with a sense of respect. He was professor of the Berlin Academy of Fine Arts, and was one of the most eminent Prussian artists of his day, although his reputation was more local than universal. His remains were removed from Dresden to Berlin for interment, and his funeral escort consisted of many of the royal personages, and of the principal artistic and literary notabilities of the Prussian capital. By order of the Prussian government, a statue of Rauch is being prepared by Prof. Drake, who was one of his most gifted pupils.

THE CRAYON.

NEW YORK, MARCH, 1858.

Sketchings.

PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

MANY people seem not to understand the meaning of this term. We do not propose to throw any new light upon it, but we will endeavor to set before our readers one or two analogies, familiarly known, that may define it clearly, as well as show the relation of the Pre-Raphaelite movement to other phases of Art development.

Everybody is more or less versed in the history of the progress of the Reformation; perhaps, however, not so cognizant of its history as of the phenomenon of its climax, which event stands forth as its great result, taking place at the time when Luther opened the dykes of conventional opinion, allowing society to be flooded with the pent-up waters of reform. But this was not the beginning of the Reformation; other and equally able minds prepared the way. Without going beyond Abelard, one of the most brilliant and popular of middle-age heretics, we find his name at the commencement of a powerful race of thinkers; men who denounced abuses, and who shed new light upon disputable points until they were resolved into established and operative truths; it was a royal genealogy of masters in thought, embracing such men as Arnauud de Brescia, Wickliffe, Huss, and Melancthon, ending in the person of Luther, whose good fortune it was to bring matters to a popular focus, and complete the structure designed by his thinking ancestors. Just so is the progress of painting. Like Abelard, Cimabue was the first artist who had the courage to embody beautiful thought in forms of new and great significance; who stepped forward a pace by quitting the sphere of inanimate symbolism, and who painted human forms and accessories associated with human feeling, under such aspects as to warm the heart of every sympathetic contemporary. "Cimabue, instead of devoting himself to letters, consumed the whole day in "drawing men, horses, houses, and other various fancies,

"an occupation to which he felt himself impelled by Nature." Then came Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, Orcagna, Massaccio, Fra Angelico, Perugino, finally, Raphael. All these artists, and others not mentioned, worked from the same inspiration, that of expressing the thought which they and their times loved best in its most beautiful garb; each artist in lineal descent showing something to his successor that had not to be done over again—unless it could be better done. And Raphael, in the sun and compass of his genius, he being the flower of his predecessors, gave to the world the most beautiful creation of the most cherished idea of his age, and the world recognized his work, and pronounced it good. Raphael stands before humanity as the highest artist-type of a certain cycle of moral and spiritual growth, the onward progress of which growth is reserved to the hierarchy of future artists to illustrate. If our readers, therefore, can understand the relation of Abelard, Arnauud de Brescia, Wickliffe, Huss, and Melancthon, who were Pre-Lutherites, to Luther, it is not difficult to comprehend the meaning of the term Pre-Raphaelism as referring to the artists who lived and paved the way for Raphael.

What we have said above applies only to our attempt to convey to the mind the meaning of the term Pre-Raphaelism. A glance at its origin and its pretensions is next in order. Pre-Raphaelism originated with the English. This remarkable people, as an eminent historian says, in substance, take pride in manifesting themselves institutionally; they love to bring ideas under the wing of a material dress, by clothing them in some peculiar English law, creed or system, either of which may be known by a chosen term. Their social, political, and religious systems are the result of a law of custom or statute; no principle of liberty outside of the British constitution is held to be of any account until English humanity has grown up to it; no individual excellence takes precedence of organized social distinction; no religious movement without the pale of the established church is more than tolerated. Instead of the spirit of an idea creating its own law, so as to find instant and current recognition, no spirit of any kind is allowed to diffuse itself without undergoing the baptism of a legal or sectional distinction;—the principle of pure, stern, uncompromising law controls everything. In accordance with this national disposition, Pre-Raphaelism arose in England, the natural result of a preceding "ism." Pre-Raphaelism sprung up to put down Royal-Academyism. Pre-Raphaelism is a species of Puritan reform against the cavalier pretension of Royal Academy sins. As the Puritans aimed to obtain the spirit of a good government by stern adherence to special forms of truth, so do the Pre-Raphaelites aim to reach the spirit of Cimabue, Giotto, and Fra Angelico, by returning to a careful study of "men, horses, and houses." Like the Puritans, too, they have an able champion. John Ruskin is the vigorous Cromwell that leads and sustains the rebellion, and he honestly uses his superb rhetorical weapons for the good of the cause and of truth.

We do not pretend to prophetic acumen, nor to take the responsibility of saying that English Pre-Raphaelism will or will not rule the universe of Art. Truth will certainly prevail, but we do not believe that it will prevail in Art, at the expense of Beauty. The spirit of Art is Beauty, and Beauty is the mysterious, indefinable glory of the Good, a condition the existence of which is far above the measure of the past, and of too free a nature to be confined within a cage made of the old wires—once brightly burnished, but now rusty and corroded